

RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

Syrians, who were widely dispersed over Iran, Iraq, and Syria. A Communist party known as the Assyrian Section of the Third International was organized among this minority.

In concluding this review of the interwar era in Iranian politics, we would like to recall that we have given it the title of the "Period of Armed Truce." It is difficult, indeed, to consider this period as a genuine peace. On the surface, conditions inside Iran and Iran's foreign relations appeared calm and undisturbed. Iran was not in a state of war either with Russia or with Britain, nor was there any open conflict between the latter two states. In reality, powerful forces of Iranian nationalism, conservative British imperialism, and dynamic Soviet Communism were at cross purposes and were, to a large degree, mutually incompatible. The most disturbing factor was, of course, the Russian revolutionary proselytism, expressed by the zealous activities of Soviet and Comintern agents in Iran. We have purposefully devoted special attention to the account of these activities. They prove that despite the anti-imperialist phraseology of the Treaty of February 26, 1921, a basic conflict between Russia and Iran was ripening. Russia was grimly serious about her ideological principles, which were the mainspring of all her actions. In 1928 these principles in their special application to colonial countries were given new expression. It may be useful to take a glimpse at the theoretical foundations of Soviet activity before investigating further Big-Power rivalry in Iran.